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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#) [CD](#)
SUBJECT: LULL IN CHAD REBEL ACTIVITY; GOC TRIES NEW TACK IN
DAR SILA

REF: NDJAMENA 1423

Classified By: CHARGE LUCY TAMLYN FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D)

1. (SBU) Summary: Fighting between Chadian rebel forces and the Chadian Army (ANT) has subsided since December 18. Reports of a rapprochement between rebel FUC (United Front for Change) leader Mahamat Nour and President Deby providing for the integration of Nour forces into the ANT have not been officially confirmed, but appear credible. The reported formation of a united front between remaining rebel groups UFDD (Union of Forces of Developmen and Democracy) and the RaFD (Rally for the Formaion of Democracy) suggests that losses have compilled these leaders to join together. Further souh, attacks by arab horsemen along the border with Sudan in the Goz Beida area has heightened UNHCR concerns regarding the security of refugees and displaced persons. It appears that the Government of Chad (GOC) is also in dialogue with arab leaders to put an end to interethnic violence. End Summary.

"THE PROMENADE IS FINISHED"

2. (SBU) On Saturday December 17, President Idriss Deby Itno met with FUC rebel leader Mahamat Nour in Guereda. Although not officially confirmed by the government, the international media has reported that this meeting resulted in a rapprochement between FUC leader Mahamat Nour and President Deby and an agreement to integrate FUC forces into the ANT. The government-aligned newspaper "Le Progres" reported on 12/20 that President Deby's calls for reconciliation had persuaded elements of (unnamed) rebel groups to request reintegration into the security services, either individually or in groups. President Deby extended his stay in eastern Chad until 12/22. He is reported as describing the situation as "totally under the control of the government. The promenade is finished." Minister of Mines Mahamat Ali Abdullah Nassour (former Minister of Territorial Administration), a powerful member of Deby's inner circle, has been sent to Biltine to be the resident Minister. The French Embassy has apparently lifted travel restrictions on French travelers, and advised its citizens that the rebel movement incurred significant losses and will be unable to launch major attacks in the near future.

REMAINING REBEL ELEMENTS REGROUP

3. (C) UFDD leader Mahamat Nouri claims that the deployment of UFDD to Sudan was a tactical withdrawal to avoid being caught between the rebel forces of Timan Erdimi's RaFD and Adoum Togoi. However, reports that UFDD forces are

regrouping and being re-supplied by the Sudanese several hundred kilometers to the east of the Chadian border in Nyala suggest that they may have been seriously bloodied during last week's fighting. A Koundoul-based Chadian army officer told the Ambassador that in the wake of last week's fighting, rebel leaders Nouri, Timan and Tom Erdimi have agreed to form a united front, headed by Nouri, for the sole purpose of reversing Chadian army advances. In this officer's view, the groups would split once their immediate military objectives in the east were met. He added that a coordinated offensive to include attacks at Adre and Amtiman was expected to begin in two to three weeks.

14. (C) In a conversation with the Ambassador on December 21, Ambassador Bechir (GOC Ambassador in Washington) said the GOC has information that the Sudanese government is currently resupplying the Chadian rebel groups after the losses they incurred in Hadjer Marfaine. The GOS has provided 300 vehicles to the movements, and is allowing the rebel groups temporary sanctuary in El Genina. Bechir also said that the GOS is conditioning the assistance on the pledge by Mahamat Nouri and Timan Erdimi to develop an alliance to launch further attacks into Chad. Bechir said that he believes the GOS will be successful in this endeavor (as opposed to past instances), since Erdimi's RaFD has already fought alongside Nouri's UFDD forces, and appears willing to fight with Nouri following the death of RaFD's high-ranking military commander Seby Aguid. Bechir also said that the GOC is aware of contacts between Sudanese authorities and former Chadian president Goukouni Weddaye, and contacts between the Sudanese embassy in Washington and Tom Erdimi, RaFD member and twin-brother of Timan who currently resides in the United States.

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ANT TAKES ON THE JANJAWOOD IN DAR SILA

15. (SBU) Inter-ethnic violence characterized by deadly raids by men on horseback flared up December 15-17 in the southern portion of Chad's border with Sudan, a heavily Dadjo area. Rumors of impending attacks December 12-13 had caused tension to rise among the local population, and local authorities (including the Governor and the Sous-Prefet) attempted to meet with chiefs of arab tribes to discuss the situation without success. In the violence that followed, refugees from Goz Amer camp (working in fields outside of the camp) were attacked and Chadian National Refugee Commission (CNAR) officials investigating the situation were ambushed and assaulted. Interethnic violence in the towns of Habile and Aradif burst out resulting in looting, theft of sheep and goats, many injuries, and possibly as many as 50 deaths. The burning of Dadjo villages near Goz Amer camp left approximately 600-700 new IDPs in the region. Residents described the attackers as familiar to them and being members of the Ouaddai and Mimi tribes as well as Borno and Dejelba Arabs.

16. (C) By December 17, the ANT, present in force with tanks and RPGs, appeared to have the situation under control and the Minister of Public Security, the Sultan of Goz Beida and the Governor of Ouaddai were present for negotiations with arab leaders, including representatives of the Ouaddai and Mimi. In a meeting with PolOff December 20, the Governor informed her that the GOC intends to establish a military base in KouKou-Angarana to provide for enforcement of whatever accord is reached with Arabs. The Governor was vague on the GOC's strategy, other than stressing the necessity for peaceful coexistence, but also stating that the GOC was prepared to take measures in the event the arab delegation refused its terms. The Governor did not rule out the possibility that Sudanese janjaweed had been engaged in the fighting, but was unequivocal in his conviction that the

Chadian rebels had a hand in the violence. Other sources are painting a harsher picture of GOC intentions vis a vis the arab groups, including purging the entire Dar Sila of their presence.

Comment

17. (C) In asserting a strong presence in Dar Sila and Dar Tama (Mahamat Nour's heartland), President Deby is seeking to project his power in the region in a more forceful manner than has previously been seen. This, and other well-honed "conflict resolution" tactics (negotiations, buy-outs) have brought a measure of calm to Chad for the time being. But very few believe that the quiet will be long-lived as Chadian rebels appear to be gearing up for further attacks in eastern Chad. In Dar Sila, it remains to be seen whether strong-arm tactics will succeed where more traditional local diplomacy has failed. Whatever the result, the impact on Chadian arab groups will doubtless be felt across the border given the fluidity of Chadian/Sudanese arab movements.

TAMLYN